

that I will support him in his effort to bring this confrontation over judicial filibusters to an end.

There should be no question in anyone's mind about my intentions. I will work in concert with our leader, and with the distinguished majority whip, Mr. MCCONNELL, to end filibusters of judicial nominations in the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There remains 14 minutes 20 seconds.

Mr. DORGAN. My colleague from Connecticut is here. Let me take a couple of minutes and then yield to my colleague for the remaining time.

I must confess, it is hard sometimes to listen on the floor of the Senate without a big broad smile at the irony of this debate. Restoring the normal traditions of the Senate? There is a debate going on in the Senate, but that is not what it is about. This is about changing the rules in the middle of a game because one party in control doesn't get everything they want on every issue all the time.

We have confirmed 205 judges for this President and opposed the confirmation of only 10 of them. Because of that, the other side has an apoplectic seizure and decides they want to turn this Senate into the House, where there is no unlimited debate and one party can treat the other party like a piece of furniture they can sit on.

The Framers of this Constitution did not consider the Senate should be a compliant body during one-party rule. The minority has rights. One of those rights is unlimited debate.

I think it is very interesting to hear on the floor of the Senate how generously the Republicans treated nominees under the Presidency of President Clinton, when they—in 50 cases of people who were notified by the President they were nominated for a lifetime appointment on the Federal court—did not even have the courtesy of giving them 1 day of hearings. Not even a day of hearings. They didn't get to see the light of day in this Congress, let alone a filibuster.

What a shameful thing to do to someone to whom the President says, I am going to nominate you for a lifetime appointment on the court. They didn't give them 1 day of hearings.

Now they complain because we approved 204 and didn't approve 10. Now they complain the President didn't get every single judgeship he wanted. Have they ever heard of the words "checks and balances"? Did they take a course at least in high school to understand what it means?

No. If this nuclear option, as it is called in this town, is employed by the majority party, with an arrogance that I have never seen in the years I have served in the Congress—if they do that, they will rue the day because they, one day, will be in the minority and they,

one day, will wonder what on Earth did we do, to eliminate the unlimited debate provision in the United States Senate that George Washington and Thomas Jefferson said represents the cooling of the passions in this country, represents the one location of reasoned debate in this Government of ours.

I hear all these discussions about how this is about traditions and norms. Nothing could be further from the truth. What the majority is trying to do is change the rules of the Senate because the minority didn't approve 10 out of 215 judges. What an arrogant attitude and what damage they will do to this institution if they employ a tactic to change the rules at this point and turn this Senate into another House of Representatives. They will have done damage for the long term and damage I believe they themselves will regret because one day they, too, will be in the minority. Then they will again understand what this Constitution provides with respect to minority rights.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

DEATH BENEFITS IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in morning business about the provision of this supplemental appropriations bill before us that rights a wrong done with regard to death benefits of those who served the United States in uniform. I begin my remarks by thanking my friend and colleague from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, and acknowledge his leadership on this very important humanitarian reform. I also thank the Senate Appropriations Committee, under the leadership of Senator COCHRAN and Senator BYRD, for bringing forward this emergency supplemental in a way that includes an important provision to improve the financial benefits for families of our fallen soldiers.

I am grateful that this supplemental uses the so-called HEROES bill, S. 77, which Senator SESSIONS and I cosponsored and introduced in January as the basis for the reforms to enhance the death benefit and the level of coverage under the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance Program.

Yesterday, the Senate amended this provision and voted to increase eligibility for the expanded death benefit to \$100,000, which was in our HEROES bill, to include all active-duty service men and women.

These reforms honor the brave men and women wearing America's uniform who have made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our liberty by giving them and their families what we the American people owe them. Obviously, nothing can replace the loss of life. But a decent death benefit and adequate life insurance can provide our service members and their loved ones with a sense of security about their future which they deserve. For too long, they

have not gotten that peace of mind, and indeed not the respect they deserve.

Senator SESSIONS and I have worked together for some time as members of the Senate Armed Services Committee to investigate and then to react to this wrong. We began looking at the question of what survivor benefits were in place for our men and women in uniform as we were concerned that the benefits being provided to families of those who lose their lives in the service of this country lagged behind benefits provided for public service employees in high-risk occupations, namely policemen and firefighters. The families of fallen policemen and firefighters deserve those higher benefits. But so, too, of course, do the families of fallen military personnel.

When Senator SESSIONS and I began this review, the death benefit paid to the families of service men and women who were killed in action was \$6,000, an embarrassing sum. A small step forward was taken last year when the death benefit was increased to \$12,000, but obviously that was still woefully inadequate.

Two studies, one done by the Department of Defense and the other done by the Government Accountability Office, documented that survivor benefits provided to some of the public employee groups I have mentioned in high-risk positions were greater than those provided for our soldiers killed in combat. That was evidently unfair, and that is why our legislation, the HEROES bill, was worked on for over 2 years with the Pentagon's service member group and veterans groups which resulted in a bill to correct that imbalance by adjusting military survivor benefits to more equitably reflect today's world.

I am very gratified that idea has taken hold, and it is reflected in the emergency supplemental before the Congress today.

With the changes adopted, if soldiers buy the servicemen's group life insurance, their families will receive \$250,000, for which the soldier pays, and then an additional \$150,000 of insurance the U.S. Government will pay for. In addition to that will be the \$100,000 death benefit. That is half a million dollars, which in these times is not a lot when we consider families left behind, a parent or a spouse and children who will need to go to college and all the expenses related to it. These families who have lost a family member have a terrible void. All of us who have visited with them in our respective States or elsewhere have felt that void and have tried to the extent we could to let them know we share it with them. But, of course, it is uniquely and singularly theirs as they go through their life. Nothing can fill that void. But the least we can do is what we do in this bill—give them some sense of financial security as they go forward, with a kind of security in a much more fundamental sense that their loved one's service has given each and every American.